**NSEAD Checklist for introducing sensitive subject matter or issue-based content into the Art, Craft and Design curriculum**

Dear NSEAD member,

This is a checklist that will assist you when introducing new issue-based work, sensitive content and topics into your curriculum offer.

It is recognised that some content within Art, Craft and Design may need to be introduced alongside supporting information and evidence as the nature of the content may cause school leaders, governing bodies, parents and carers some concern.

When you use the checklist below, you will be able to develop an evidence-based proposal for the inclusion of any sensitive content. This checklist allows NSEAD members to pre-empt these concerns.

Caveat – this is not intended to be a panacea that will stop all opposition to this initiative. Ultimately, the decision to permit rests with your Governing Body.

What might be sensitive subject matter or content?

It depends on your setting, your students and your community. Whilst there are broad questions of ethics and relevance that apply in all settings, every school or college will have different needs that you should consider. What is uncontroversial in one setting may cause great concern in another. For example the use of life models, use of portraits in faith schools; use of propaganda posters that might show bias.

There are many stakeholders / people with a vested interest that need to be considered when introducing a new topic into a curriculum. This is especially the case when the topic in question can elicit such varying degrees of response. A key element in the checklist below is one of transparency and openness, as by sharing the thinking and rationale behind what is being proposed, allows for the topic to be discussed and debated in a mature, knowledgeable and less reactive environment.

Remember, this is about persuasion as much as it is about information, and it is best remembered that many members of the Governing Body see their role as maintaining the reputation, good name and integrity of the school. They will not necessarily be up to speed or au fait with contemporary thinking in Art, Craft or Design Education but they will be in many instances familiar with the concept of safeguarding and may see this new topic through this lens.

We wish you good luck with your endeavour!

This is where the checklist and an evidence-based approach can assist.

**Checklist/Ideas**

1. Draft an outline Scheme of Work/Programme of Study that provides some basic detail of what the proposed unit would look like.
2. Construct a specific Risk Assessment (see Appendix 1)

This will allow you to identify who could be offended, misrepresented or undervalued.

1. Meet with your Subject Line Manager from SLT to elicit their support. They can be shown your outline brief, your rationale, risk assessment and, as they have the experience and relationships from being on SLT, they can assist with helping you get an opportunity to present your proposal.
2. Meet with your link governor. For the same reason as above, their support and influence in gaining a platform but additionally they have an important role in challenging any opposition and misinformation.
3. Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for safeguarding.
   * Draft them a letter stating
     1. what you wish to introduce,
     2. your rationale for introducing this topic,
     3. an outline of the scheme of work / programme of study,
     4. that you have created a risk assessment
     5. that you are seeking their support and would like a response from them that identifies any concerns they have and what mitigations you would need to put in place to satisfy these concerns.
4. Solicit the opinions of key stakeholders. This is to try and develop your own understanding of the need and the specific content to cover. It allows you to develop an understanding of whether there is an appetite for what you wish to introduce. If this is succesful and feedback supports the initiative, this allows for evidence from key people who would be impacted by the new topic to be presented to the people who make the decisions.

People to consider approaching could include

* + Students (student voice)
  + Parents and carers
  + Colleagues within and outside of your place of work

1. Can you support the initiative and what it wishes to achieve in terms of outcomes with evidence-based research? The ability to provide respected sources citing support in favour that is empirical and not just anecdotal is valuable.
2. Can the initiative fit within elements of the whole school development plan or are there elements where there can be opportunities enabled for cross-curricular links?
3. Is the proposal articulated in written language that is something a non-subject specialist can understand? This is likely to help identify more inclusive and sustainable practices, which can then be addressed in the risk assessment.

NSEAD

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